

For Immediate Release

Contact: Erica Daughtrey

April 21, 2010

201-222-2828

Washington, D.C.-- Yesterday, Congressman Sires joined his Urban Parks Task Force colleagues in hosting a briefing on the role of parks in developing urban communities. In his speech, Sires highlighted the progress of his bill, H.R. 3734, the Urban Revitalization and Livable Communities Act, which he introduced in October, 2009. The panel discussion included professors from the Wharton School of Economics and Georgia State Institute of Technology, a former NFL player and landscape architect, and a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development representative.

"The panelists for our first Urban Parks Task Force briefing provided hard numbers and facts on the economic benefits that parks bring to our communities," said Congressman Sires. "Nearly 80% of our nation lives in urban areas and federal investment in parks is necessary to achieve important national goals of increasing exercise, providing safe alternatives for at-risk youth, and spurring local economic development. That is why I introduced H.R. 3734, the Urban Revitalization and Livable Communities Act last fall," said Congressman Sires.

H.R. 3734 would provide federal assistance grants that would be matched with local funds to rehabilitate and develop urban parks and community recreational infrastructure.

Economically distressed communities could use these grants to improve their recreational facilities and infrastructure, increase economic development, improve safety in communities and provide healthy options for at-risk children. This legislation specifically creates four types of grants--- rehabilitation grants, innovation grants, at-risk youth recreation grants, and recovery action program grants. This bill would allocate \$445,000,000 for fiscal years 2011- 2015.

“As a former Mayor who revitalized 19 urban parks for a population of 50,000, I know the impact that parks have on communities,” said Sires. “Green spaces play key roles in improving the economy, health, and quality of life in our communities. Parks provided a refuge to me when I was growing up and both federal and local investment in parks can help our nation,” said Congressman Sires.

###